MissionCritical Communications, Radio Resource International, and Public Safety Report - wireless voice and data communications for mobile, remote and public safety operations

NIST Receives Comments from 30 Sources on Public-Safety Broadband Network (11/30/11)

Commercial standards, created in an open forum and publically available, should be a key feature of a broadband communications network for the nation's emergency services, according to public comments garnered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

The value of an open commercial standards process for interoperability, innovation and affordability was echoed in many of the comments made in response to a NIST request in September for suggestions on the planned emergency services network.

Comments came from 30 sources in industry, academia, public safety associations, state and local entities, and private citizens. The portfolio of the comments received by NIST is available here.
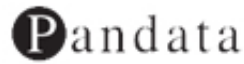
The joint NIST-National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program is developing a demonstration public-safety broadband network. The network would use a portion of the 700 MHz radio frequency spectrum, and the test bed will provide a common site for manufacturers, carriers and public-safety agencies to evaluate advanced broadband communications equipment and software tailored specifically to the needs of emergency first responders.

Other recurring subjects in the submitted comments include:

• The need for an open and collaborative process for prioritizing research and development initiatives;

• The value of an open application platform such as the application programming interface (API);

• The benefits of network sharing capabilities; and

• The possibility of the network including government-to-citizen communications.

In addition to these topics, several research and development priorities were seen throughout the majority of the submissions. These focused primarily on functions and features that are not used by commercial markets, specifically direct mode/talk around, priority/pre-emption, quality of service and security/access control.

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